

Message Text

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67

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 /085 W

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R 171220Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 329

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 6220

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR AG SA SS MO

SUBJECT: SAHARA DEVELOPMENTS AND POSSIBLE SAUDI INITIATIVES

REF: JIDDA 7455

1. TRAVELS OF SAUDI CROWN PRINCE FAHD, WHO ARRIVED IN MOROCCO NOV 11, VISITED NOUAKCHOTT (NOUAKCHOTT 798) BRIEFLY ON NOV 14 AND ALGIERS NOV 15-16 (ALGIERS 2728), WOULD SEEM TO CONFIRM THAT SOME FORM OF SAUDI INITIATIVE WITH REGARD TO AREA TENSIONS IS UNDERWAY. FAHD RETURNED TO RABAT NOV 16 AFTER ALGIERS STOP AND WILL ATTEND NOV 17 MOROCCAN NATIONAL DAY PARADE AT KING'S SIDE IN MARRAKECH.

2. MOROCCANS HAVE HANDLED VISIT IN VERY OBLIQUE MANNER. GOM MEDIA TANTALIZINGLY SURFACED THE IDEA OF A POSSIBLE SAUDI ROLE (RABAT 5982) BEFORE FAHD VISIT WAS EVEN ANNOUNCED. THE DAY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL, SEMI-OFFICIAL MAROC SOIR PUBLISHED AN EDITORIAL TITLED, "RECONCILIATION, YES; CONCESSIONS, NEVER," THE THRUST OF WHICH WAS TO WARN THAT ANY CONCESSIONS TO BE MADE MUST COME FROM THE "AGRESSOR," BOUMEDIENE. ON NOV 13, PM OSMAN DOWNPLAYED POSSIBILITY THAT THERE WAS ANY "MEDIATION" ASPECT OF FAHD TRIP, CONFIDENTIAL

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CALLING IT "GOODWILL MISSION" WHICH "COULD" TAKE FAHD TO MAURITANIA

AND ALGERIA (THESE REMARKS WERE CARRIED BY AFP BUT NOT BY LOCAL PRESS). THE KING'S TOAST TO FAHD AT NOV 13 DINNER THANKED THE SAUDI FOR "ALL THE DEMARCHES WHICH YOU ARE CONTINUING TO UNDERTAKE TO PERMIT THIS... COUNTRY TO MOVE AHEAD IN REALIZING ITS ASPIRATIONS IN PEACE."

3. GOM REFERENCES TO ALGERIA HAVE ABATED IN VOLUME FOLLOWING REFERRAL OF SAHARA ISSUE IN UNGA AND ARRIVAL OF FAHD. PM AVERRED TO AFP NOV 12 THAT MOROCCAN FORCES WERE IN CONTROL OF THE SAHARA AND, IN THE FIRST OFFICIAL COMMENT ON THIS SUBJECT, VOLUNTEERED THAT THE GOM SAW NO NECESSITY OF USING LOCAL SAHARANS IN ANY COUNTER-GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES. HE WENT ON TO NOTE THAT MOROCCO HAD EXERCISED "GREAT PATIENCE" TO DATE AND SAID THAT IT WISHED TO KEEP A "COOL HEAD" IN THE HOPE THAT "REASON" WOULD PREVAIL.

4. COMMENT: IT IS UNCLEAR FROM THE HIGHLY CIRCUMSPECT ATMOSPHERE HERE WHETHER ANY PROGRESS IS BEING MADE. NONE OF THE PARTIES -- ABOVE ALL, MOROCCO -- COULD IGNORE A FORCEFUL SAUDI ATTEMPT IN THE PERSON OF PRINCE FAHD TO INITIATE CONTACTS, BUT THE GENERAL TONE OF THE OUTPUT HERE AND THE HISTORY OF PAST MEDIATION ATTEMPTS MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO SEE ANY GREAT LIKELIHOOD OF COMPROMISE UNLESS ALGERIA IS FINALLY READY TO BACK OFF.
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